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No. 93.

# WHAT IS IT

## TO BELIEVE ON CHRIST?

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Reader, did you ever ask this question? Is it your sincere and earnest wish to have it answered? If so, this Tract is intended *for you.* May God make it a blessing to your soul.

I will suppose that you have at some time felt alarmed in view of your sins, and inquired in your thoughts, if not in words, "What must I do to be saved?" You have the same answer that Paul gave to the jailor, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." Still you hesitate. You ask what this language means. You desire to know *what it is* to believe on Christ.

Your wish, fellow-sinner, is a very reasonable one. The wonder and the sin is, that you have not asked such a question before. It is a most important and solemn question. It has much to do with your salvation; for the BIBLE declares, "He that believeth on the SON hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the SON, shall not see life: *but the wrath of* GOD *abideth on him.*"

"*What is it to believe on Christ?*" It is,

TO FEEL YOUR NEED OF HIM;

TO BELIEVE THAT HE IS ABLE AND WILLING TO SAVE YOU, AND TO SAVE YOU NOW; and

TO CAST YOURSELF UNRESERVEDLY ON HIS MERCY, and TRUST IN HIM ALONE FOR SALVATION.

*To feel you need of him.* Till you do this, you will never seek him earnestly, or trust him wholly. You do not send for a physician till you feel yourself to be ill. It was only when Peter found he was beginning to sink, that he cried, "Lord, save me." So the sinner never goes to Christ in a right manner, till he feels himself to be a lost, wretched being. It is not enough to *know* this: you must *feel* it.

Do you say *you cannot?* O, then, *how* lost, *how* wretched you must be! Your very language ought to fill you with shame and fear. Whose fault is it that you do not feel? How long need it be before you feel? You can feel *alarm* when a murderer holds you in his grasp; you can feel *sorrow* when a friend is dying in agony before your eyes; and can you feel no sorrow when you think of a suffering Saviour, whose love you have abused—no alarm, when you call to mind that fearful judgment to which you are hastening?—Will you dare tell your Judge, at the great day, that you could not feel your need of a Saviour?

But you say, "I *do* feel, at least in some degree, that I am a poor, guilty, undone sinner; but this will not save me." *No, it will not.* Thousands have felt this and perished. You must also,

*Believe that Christ is able and willing to save you, and to save you* NOW. He is able, for he is almighty. You are a great sinner, but Christ is a great Saviour. Satan has been trying to persuade you that Christ is not able to save so great a sinner as you are. It is false. He *is* able, and

unless you *believe this* in all its glorious extent, you will no more be willing to trust him, than a man on the roof of a burning house will step upon a weak ladder which he knows will give away beneath him.

You must believe that he is *willing*. He has in many ways shown himself to be willing. If you doubt it, you disbelieve and offend him. Does it please him, think you, when he utters this kind welcome, "Whosoever cometh unto me, *I will in nowise cast out*," to hear you reply, "O Lord, I cannot think that thou wouldst receive such an one as me, if I should come?" Yet you do in effect say this, every moment you cherish the feeling that you are too sinful to hope of pardon. You mistake this for humility; but it is unbeliet, and sin.

You must believe that he is willing *now*. Perhaps you have thought he *would* be willing, after a few more days or weeks spent in praying and weeping and growing better. Be assured your worst enemy wants no more than than you should continue to think so. *You are growing no better.* You are doing nothing to gain

Christ's favor while you refuse to yield to his invitations. Until you belive that he is able and willing to save you, and to do it NOW, you never will be saved. The great enemy of your soul does not wish you to set a time *far distant* when you can go to Christ, and when he will be willing to receive you. If you will *continue* to place that time at the distance of a week, or an hour, or a minute, his object is gained, and your soul is lost.

But you ask, "Does not a sinner, at the moment of his actual submission to the Saviour, feel more fit to be pardoned; and is not Christ more willing to pardon him, than ever before?" No, dear friend, NO! He was *less* fit to be pardoned, for his sins had been increasing every moment up to that very time; and Christ was no more *willing* to pardon him than he had always been. Every Christian will tell you that, so far as Christ's willingness was concerned, he might as well have found peace in him months or years sooner, as when he hopes he *was* pardoned. The next thing required of you is,

*To cast yourself unreservedly upon his mercy, and trust in him alone for salvation.* This implies that you renounce all expectations of saving yourself, or of being saved any other way than through the righteousness and redemption of Christ. Did you ever feel as if you had done all

you could? Have you tried to think of something more to do to obtain hope and forgiveness? You have done *too much* in this way already.

Just stop doing, and begin to trust Christ to do all, and you are safe. A man is rowing a boat on a river just above a dreadful cataract. The current begins to bear him downward, the spectators on the banks give him up for lost, "He is gone," they all exclaim. But in another moment a rope is thrown towards the wretched man, it strikes the water near the boat; *now* how does the case stand? Do all the spectators call upon him *to row*, to row *stronger*, to *try harder* to reach the shore, when with every stroke of his arm the boat is evidently floating towards the falls? O no, the eager and united cry is, "*Drop your oars! Give up your desperate attempt!* TAKE HOLD OF THE ROPE! But he chooses to row, and in a few minutes he disappears and perishes. All his hope lay, not in rowing, but in *ceasing* to row; for while he was rowing he could not grasp the rope. So all the sinner's hope lies not in struggling to save himself, but in *ceasing* to struggle; for while he expects soon to accomplish the work of salvation, he will not look to Christ to do it for him. It is not *doing*, but *yielding*, that is required.

But you say, "If all I have to do is to cease from attempting to save myself, and to be willing that Christ should do the work of my salvation, why do you urge me *to become a Christian*, or to

do *any thing?* Why not let me sit still, and wait till Christ shall come and pardon me?" And what if the man in the boat dropped his oar, and then folded his hands and waited for the rope to save him? He might as well have died rowing as sitting still, and would *as certainly* have died in the latter case as in the former. But he must *grasp the rope.* So the sinner must *lay hold upon the cross*—not by waiting till he is better, but by first concluding that he shall never be any better in the way he is going on, and then *looking to Christ.* As he perceives the ground sinking beneath him, and feels how lost and wretched he is, filled with mingled despair and hope—despair in himself, and hope in the power and mercy of Christ—he says,

> "I stand upon a mountain's edge,
> O save me, lest I fall!"

His prayer is heard—the heart of the compassionate Saviour is ready to welcome him—the arms of mercy are stretched out to receive him—a word of kind welcome reaches his ear, "*Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.*" He believes that word—he trusts that heart—he falls into those arms, *and he is safe.*

Now, dear reader, your question is answered. Is not the answer true? Is it not *plain*? Do you not see your mistake? Since all things are

now ready, and the Holy Spirit not quite grieved away from your heart by your delay, will you wait any longer?

Does your heart now say, "Lord, I believe: help thou mine unbelief?" Will you take the Saviour *at his word?* Are you willing to trust him to do *the whole work* of your salvation?

If so, lay down this tract; prostrate yourself before this waiting, insulted, and still compassionate Redeemer; tell him all your heart, and he will pardon, accept, and save you.

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# THE ACCEPTED TIME.

1 Now is the accepted time,
Now is the day of grace;
Now, sinner, come without delay
And seek the Saviour's face.

2 Now is the accepted time,
The Saviour calls to-day;
To-morrow it may be too late—
Then why should you delay?

3 Now is the accepted tmie,
The Gospel bids you come;
And every promise in his word
Declares there yet is room.

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